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Women's Studies & Gender Studies: Digest  
Magazine

Women's Studies and Gender Studies

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## Volume 10, Issue 13: December 2, 2010

Women's Studies & Gender Studies Program  
*Loyola University Chicago*

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# The weekly Digest

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*Excerpts, Relics and Correspondence from  
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*Women's Studies & Gender Studies*  
*light the world on fire*

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**WELCOME to the newly revamped digital Digest.**

**Utilize our INTERACTIVE design by clicking on subjects to jump!**

**Enjoy our end-of-semester mega-issue on THE BODY.**

## the WSGS Mission:

Founded in 1979, Loyola's Women's Studies Program is the first women's studies program at a Jesuit institution and has served as a model for women's studies programs at other Jesuit and Catholic universities. Our mission is to introduce students to feminist scholarship across the disciplines and the professional schools; to provide innovative, challenging, and thoughtful approaches to learning; and to promote social justice.

## the DIGEST Background & Mission:

In the fall of 2007, Betsy Jones Hemenway, director of Loyola's WSGS program, decided to synthesize access to opportunities and resources constantly available within academic circles. She wanted busy students and instructors to have a convenient, timely, and consolidated site for announcements, so she worked out a "weekly digest" to the Loyola WSGS community. In the fall of 2010, graduate student Curtis Main, aimed at furthering and widening her efforts by creating a digital, interactive magazine in the style of a feminist zine.

The WSGS Weekly Digest mission is to inform, assist, and connect the continually growing WSGS department to the people of Loyola and beyond, utilizing and nourishing feminist and radical reconceptions for societies. As an extension of the program, the Digest aims to respect, reflect, and expand upon the WSGS mission. The WSGS Weekly Digest attempts to be proactive and helpful, taking into account various sides and submitting thoughtful, researched alternatives. We hope to provide space and support for a variety of voices while bridging communities of activists.

## Click here to CONTRIBUTE (guidelines)!

We encourage Loyola students and staff, and ALL readers, to share with us, small or large, simple or complex.

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## STAFF & GUESTS:

**J. Curtis Main**  
Editor  
Design  
Content

**Betsy Jones Hemenway**  
WSGS Director  
Content Editor

**Brandie Rae Madrid**  
Junior Editor  
Design  
Writer

**Sophia Bairaktaris**  
Resources Editor

**Kyla Barranco**  
Columnist

## THE BODY WRITERS:

**Sophia Bairaktaris**

**Cassandra Damm**

**Betsy Redelman**

**Yoni Siden**

**Ida SeferRoche**

**Victoria Volbuck**

**J. Curtis Main**

**Brandie Madrid**

**Elizabeth Greenwood**

**snowlion**

**Kyla Barranco**

# THE BODY

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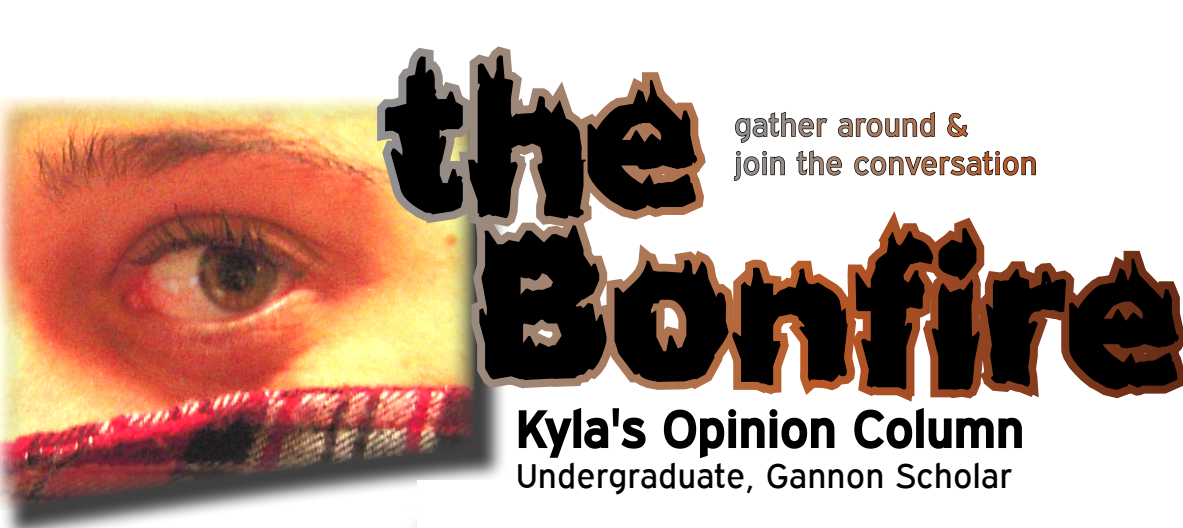
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gather around &  
join the conversation

# the Bonfire

Kyla's Opinion Column  
Undergraduate, Gannon Scholar



this week: **"Prostitution: to do or not to do"**

"The big difference between sex for money and sex for free is that sex for money usually costs a lot less." -- Brendan Behan

As Suzy Parker correctly communicates, most, if not all humans do some type of service for money in their lifetime. Teachers, lawyers, plumbers, doctors, priests, you name it. But when people perform sex for money, suddenly the handcuffs come out and the world spins off its axis. I've heard just about all the arguments: it's degrading, it's unsafe, etc. But, so far, no one has really convinced me that prostitution is THAT much different than other jobs.

It's degrading: Interesting, there are lots of things out there that are degrading, and it's all about one's own personal definition of what degrading really is. In this case, it's all about the individual and how one views sex. To me, it's not degrading because sex is not degrading. Whether it is given out as an act of love or as a service, sex is one of the most normal acts humans perform. As long as it's a consensual act between legal adults, then I believe that it's still positive.

On the scale of good and bad things that we humans do to one another, I would place murder, rape, and slavery on the bottom. On the top? I cannot argue that giving another individual an orgasm, the sexual attention they desire, or the escape from outside stresses is not among the list of "good" things we do for one another. Unless it's degrading to pleasure other people, then I don't see how sex, whether free or paid for, can be a bad thing.

**To me, it's not degrading because sex is not degrading.  
Whether it is given out as an act of love or as a service,  
sex is one of the most normal acts humans perform.**

Although selling your body to an industry is usually frowned down upon in this society, what many people fail to realize is that prostitution is only one form of this transaction. Actors, actresses, models, and athletes, just to name a few, sell their bodies everyday for money. And for many of them it IS degrading and unsafe. Anorexia, bulimia, drug abuse, and excessive stressors have become commonplace in these glamorized

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positions. Isn't that unsafe and at time degrading? Yet, people idolize them, not arrest them (well, most of them...).

It's unsafe: I cannot argue with the fact that, like many, MANY, other things in this world we live in, prostitution can at times lead to dangerous situations. But this is a problematic fact. Why is prostitution dangerous? Dare I say that it may be due to the law that makes it illegal? The fact that prostitution is illegal makes it an industry full of deceit and at times danger. Without proper laws or regulations for prostitution, it will continue to be an industry that regulates itself, which leads to the drugs, sexual assault, and STDs that the industry is commonly known for.

If prostitution was legal then not only would some economies flourish, but prostitutes would also be safer. In a world where this service was legalized, prostitutes would not only be able to protect themselves more fully, but also their clients.

This isn't to say that I condone ALL aspects of sex work. There are various aspects to prostitution, like many other jobs, that are negative. When sexual assault, incest, forced non consensual sex, and sexism come into play then by no means is any type of prostitution okay. So long as activity doesn't result in any of these things, prostitution is safe and condonable.

When reflecting upon everyday life, you often hear of men and women getting what they want through sexual pleasure or people using tools such as flattery, gifts, and other tools of adoration to achieve sex. How different is this from selling sex? I hear and see it all the time: A man or woman wants something sexual - a few gifts, a romantic date or two, and maybe even dropping that word many long to hear - LOVE, and something is expected, and often given, in return. In this everyday occurrence, people are trading some commodity, whatever it may be, for sex.

But, if one wishes to criticize prostitution, that's okay. But maybe it's not the prostitution itself people need to criticize. How about the factors influencing people to take on this job? Poverty, lack of education, and the lack of resources available to many women and men. In order to tackle this "degrading" and "unsafe" career choice, those issues, among others, need to be resolved first. And what about prostitutes clients? If it weren't for the demand for paid sex, then prostitution would die out. What needs aren't being met in marriages, committed relationships, and the human existence that are influencing individuals to pay for sex? Without removing the causes, the effect will remain. So if someone does have a problem with it, take it out on those unfortunate causes, not the sex worker.

In the end, prostitution is similar to many other jobs and ultimately an act of personal expression. Being that it's something that has to do with sex, like strip clubs, pornography, or god forbid pre-marital sex, it's automatically looked down upon by many members of society which leads to the stigma it carries and the illegality of it. If the selling of one's body for money is to be made illegal for some, then it should be made illegal for all. I'll allow the dear Saint Augustine to steal the final words of this piece...

"Remove prostitutes from human affairs, and you will destroy everything with lust."  
-Saint Augustine

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# Quote Corner <sup>#10</sup>

Think. Know. Speak.  
Spread. Act. Transform.

Whoopi Goldberg

Actress | Comedien | Activist | Writer



I'm a great believer in claiming farts. Always have, always will. I don't want to be blamed for one of your's. Mine I know. Mine I can control. Yours, who the f\*ck knows what's going on down there?

Decisions are being made by passionate people doing things in their personal lives that I would not do in mine. Are they bad guys? I don't think so. Maybe they're just misguided, or misinformed, or horny.

I'm a great believer in claiming farts. Always have, always will. I don't want to be blamed for one of yours. Mine I know. Mine I can control. Yours, who the f\*ck knows what's going on down there?

And then you have to squat, or straddle the bowl, if you're in a public rest room, and fiddle with the cardboard and the string and do the best you can, but the best you can still leaves you with a little string dangling from your vagina. I don't know about you, but I walk around feeling like one of those wooden marionettes. You know, pull my string and my arms'll flap up and down. It's just too f\*cking ridiculous.

The hardest thing in the world is to get along with one other person, 'cause they're not you. It's basic. People will disappoint you all the time. Expect it. Realize that people are different and not everybody is gonna think like you. Some people will just knock you out with their ridiculousness, but that's them, you know. That's not you.

So, no, I am not an African-American. I'm not from Africa. I'm from New York. My roots run deeper than most of the people who don't have anything in front of the word American.

It's never too early to start. Play around down there. See what happens. Figure out what feels good, and when, and why. And keep at it.

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**SCREEN**ing films for entertainment value as well as fair representations of diversity to help give busy students/activists the tools to decide whether they want to press **PLAY**.

# SCREEN/PLAY

By Brandie Rae Madrid, Loyola Undergraduate,  
Double Major: English Lit & WSGS

this week: *Shortbus*

John Cameron Mitchell's 2006 film *Shortbus* may be considered an even bolder take on sex and sexuality than his hit musical *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, a theatre-piece-turned-film about a botched operation of a male to female transperson. *Shortbus* is daring in that it captures actual sex acts like bondage, intercourse, fellatio, self-fellatio, and masturbation but also because it deals with many issues of the body, relationships, and sexuality that are rarely on display in any film.

The ensemble cast is led by Sofia (Sook-Yin Lee) who describes herself as "pre-orgasmic," having never obtained an orgasm from any method, including sex with her husband. Sofia appears as a buttoned-down relationship therapist, but only after we see her naked and engaging in multiple sex acts with her husband. Sofia "comes from a very traditional Chinese-Canadian family," and her descriptions of that strictness

coupled with the watchful eye of her father may imply a cultural and familial reasoning behind her alienation from those around her as well as from her inability to orgasm.

Her journey in the film is mostly an attempt to achieve orgasm like the scene in a deprivation tank where she resorts to slapping her crotch. Her friend who is in the tank with her, feeding her an erotic story, removes her hand and says, "You gotta pull the bus over; you're not riding safely."

The other main protagonists are James (Paul Dawson) and Jamie (PJ DeBoy), who attempt to expand their relationship by including a third partner, Ceth (Jay Brannan). Sofia is James and Jamie's couples therapist, but they discover that she is the one in need of a more holistic therapy herself. Therefore, they bring her to a place called

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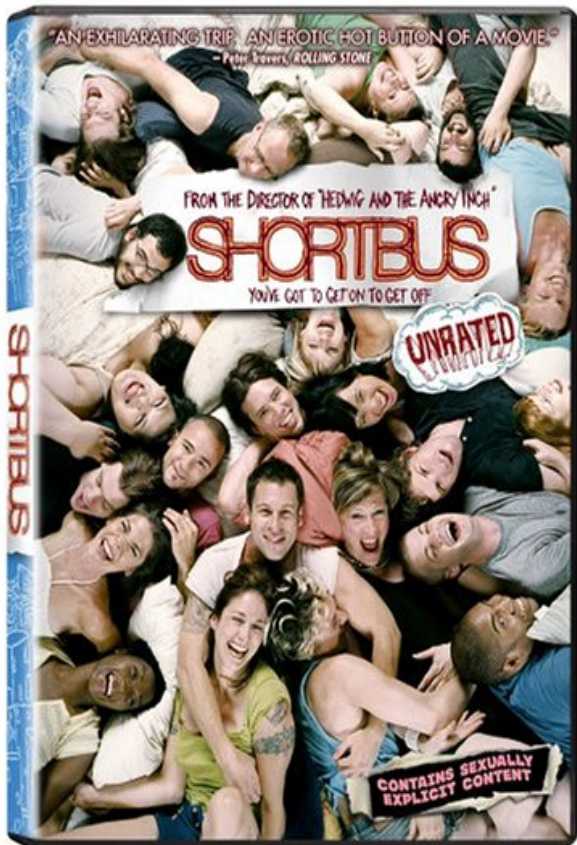
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## this week: **SHORTBUS** **SCREEN/PLAY** cont.

Shortbus, an allusion to the name many children give to the school bus for special needs children. The host calls it "a salon for the gifted and challenged," or in other words, a place where queers and other "weirdos" can congregate, share, and explore their sexuality.

The film itself is a love song to New York and queer spaces. Shortbus is able to exist as a queer space because NYC itself is a haven for many queers. The film opens with a close-up panning of a technicolor Statue of Liberty, caressing and fondling her with the eye of the camera. The camera then swoops through a painted version of New York's cityscape and into various apartments where sex acts are occurring or being viewed a la Rear Window.

The final swoop hovers onto the space left by the Twin Towers before zooming into a bondage scene where the john asks the dominatrix "Are you a top or a bottom?" When Mistress Severin (Lindsay Beamish) does not respond directly, he asks, "Let me put it this way: do you think we should get out of Iraq?" And when Sofia asks the host of Shortbus why all sorts of young people have flocked to the city, he whispers, "9-11. It's the only thing real that's ever happened to them." Shortbus is not afraid to delve into the darker parts of contemporary New York City or the darker parts of sexuality.

Among some of the taboos that are explored in the film are the use of menstrual blood in performance art and intergenerational relationships. The sex scenes are infused with realism and humor, such as when a threesome among the two Jamies and Ceth devolves into a rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner" where each person uses the body parts of another as instruments. Overall, the film is a comedy and a celebration of sex and queer communities. In the end, not everyone is at the front of the bus, but when they're done with the journey, they can get off whenever and however they want.

**Watchability:** Ownable, and definitely invite some open-minded friends over to watch it with you.

**Themes and Issues:** queer spaces, New York City, queer identities (trans, lesbian, gay, etc.), voyeurism, BDSM, orgasms, race, intergenerational relationships, open relationships, depression, suicide, body function, prostitution, etc.

**Social Import:** One of the most disappointing things about the film is that it is currently one-of-a-kind. When viewing it with friends, we wished there were more films with the courage to show sex and relationships with such diversity and heart. This film will be important in the future if it inspires other writers and filmmakers to create similar works. Shortbus tries hard to be inclusive of everyone: various races, physical abilities, cultures, identities, and ages, almost to the point of spreading itself too thin. If other works would take a cue and include a wider range of people in their consideration and casts, the film world would explode with possibility.



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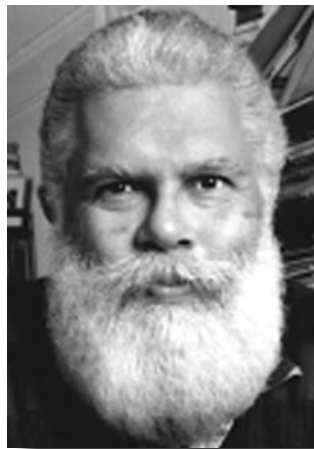
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# Quote Corner <sup>#11</sup>

Think. Know. Speak.  
Spread. Act. Transform.

Samuel R. Delaney

Sex-positive Queer Theorist | Author | Activist



Besides the fear of the outside that Ana brought within, and provisional arguments about women, women in society, women in this society put aside, though the introduction of numbers of women, gay, straight, or bi, into such a scene might certainly cause some problems, those problems would nevertheless be just that: social problems to be socially solved. *[Delaney on women taking part in public pleasures]*

There are as many different styles, intensities, and timbres to sex as there are people. The variety of nuance and attitude blends into the variety of techniques and actions employed, which finally sequesters, as seamlessly, into the variety of sexual objects the range of humankind desires.

There may be as many ideal sex lives as there are different people. As a general template, I've always felt my best when I had a single person in my life as a sexual focus, at the same time a general population of encounters with different men (of the sort I've been describing here), along with a healthy masturbatory life.

The class war raging constantly and often silently in the comparatively stabilized societies of the developed world perpetually works for the erosion of the social practices through which interclass communication takes place and of the institutions holding those practices stable, so that new institutions must always be conceived and set in place to take over the jobs of those that are battered again and again till they are destroyed.

Thus, contact is often an outdoor sport; networking tends to occur indoors.

Networking tends to be professional and motive-driven. Contact tends to be more broadly social and appears random. Networking crosses class lines only in the most vigilant manner. Contact regularly crosses class lines in those public spaces in which interclass encounters are at their most frequent.

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# MADADS: BUSTED ADVERTISING BUSTLING ECONOMY

## THIS WEEK'S FOCUS: WHITE BEAUTY STANDARDS

Many people (most commonly black women) use strong, corrosive bases and acids, like sodium/calcium/ammonium hydroxide and phosphoric acid, to straighten their waves and curls. Why? For whom?

Is there something wrong with some people's natural hair that they must spend loads of money and time using dangerous chemicals? How does whiteness influence beauty standards?

Why are companies and stylists selling and promoting these images?



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# *glimpses...* **Cristina Lombardi-Diop**

Interviews with WSGS allies, students, faculty, & community  
By J. Curtis Main

Interview by Sophia Bairaktaris  
Transcription by Brandie Madrid

**SB:** Okay, so can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

**CLD:** Um, yes. Um, I am an... associate professor. I teach comparative studies, Italian studies, women and gender studies. I work on race and mostly colonial issues. Colonial, postcolonial, racial, race, and gender -- the interconnections, intersectionality of race, gender, and class in the European context over the span of at least two centuries. I deal mostly with 19th, 20th and contemporary issues. I'm currently a research scholar here at Loyola. I'm here for the fall semester, almost finished. [CLD laughs, SB joins in]

**SB:** Um, what are you researching?

**CLD:** I'm working now on two interrelated issues. One is a volume on postcolonial Italy where I look at the colonial past, the colonial history and the colonial memory of Italy and Italians in Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries and in relation to contemporary migrations to Italy from Africa and other continents. Um, this is an interdisciplinary volume I am editing with another scholar. We'll be including literature, sociological studies, film studies, and studies on memory and gender and race. This is one thing. Then there is my volume. I'm working on the representations of blackness and race in postwar Italy from World War II to contemporary times, and I'm looking in particular at the representations of whiteness and blackness, the proximity of white and black bodies in advertisements.

**SB:** Mhm. So where are you headed after Loyola?

**CLD:** I'll be visiting professor at University of California Berkeley.

**SB:** And then are you going back to Italy after?

**CLD:** Yeah. That's the plan.

**SB:** And where are you from in Italy?

**CLD:** I'm from Rome.

**SB:** And were you born there?

**CLD:** I was born and raised, and I, um, did my undergraduate studies in Rome, at the University of Rome. Then I won a Fulbright scholarship and I went to Yale where I earned a Master's degree in African and African American studies. From there, I moved to NYU for a Ph.D. in comparative studies.



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**CLD:** Um, what [did I study]? I was a major in foreign languages and literatures, and I did Spanish, French, and English. But I was a major in what we call Anglo-American Literature, British and American Literature, yeah.

**SB:** And why did you come to Loyola?

**CLD:** Oh, well, Loyola is really a central university in the city of Chicago, and I've always been very attracted by it. I also have to say that I did teach at the Rome Center in 2001, and I've established a very good relationship, a friendship and collegiality with Susana Cavallo, the acting director at the Rome Center, so when she invited me to participate in a conference on women in the Mediterranean, I was very excited about knowing more about the Chicago campus. At the conference I met the Provost and I met Betsy Hemenway, and that's how the connection began.

**SB:** Ok, and um, what do you like about Chicago the most?

**CLD:** Oh, almost everything... what I like most is its understatement. I mean, it's a city that I think has a lot to offer but doesn't boast about it. And I really love also the spirit of the city. I think it's a city of endurance and resilience. I uh, I really like that, I really find it congenial. I also like the students here. I think what I've found at Loyola is that students are very much keen on getting a valuable education and they don't take it for granted. I think they have no entitlement about it. I think that kind of approach is really one I like.

**SB:** And what do you like least about the city, if anything?

**CLD:** I found it too segregated, and that bothers me. I, you know I don't think I've experienced the bad parts of the city and I think it's because I'm not necessarily a minority and I'm not necessarily poor. And so that, I'm aware of the limits of my perspective when I look at the city and I know that the city has a lot of poverty as well.

**SB:** And do you consider yourself white?

**CLD:** Uh, yes, I do, here. Yeah, that's how I am perceived and that's who I am.

**SB:** And how has that affected your life do you think?

**CLD:** Well, it's a certainly convenient... identity. Um, mmm, I am, I have all the privileges of being a European, a well-educated person. And I was just thinking about it as I travel with a visa, a visiting scholar visa, I have all the doors open, I mean I'm not a citizen of the United States, that's why I do not share fully in all the privileges of citizenship. I share in the privileges of my being a professor and so that comes not only with the privilege of whiteness but also with the privilege of citizenship. I think the racial issue is one thing but I think that the right to citizenship is also another important issue. And, you see, the city of Chicago has a history of migration and immigration and I think it's very much still at the forefront of dealing with issues of legality and residenceship and all of that.

**SB:** Do you consider yourself a feminist?

**CLD:** Yes I do, I do. Um, It's funny 'cause for me feminism is both an intellectual and mental attitude but also a practice of life. And I have to say that I do try to live it in my daily life. I certainly do believe in it. I consider myself one.

**SB:** And do you have a favorite feminist word or key phrase or anything?

**CLD:** Yeah, one thing that my students have grown very tired of is "agency." I think that in fact, thinking of feminism in a global perspective, I think that as a Westerner and as a Western feminist, I try to, I tend to overlook the privileges that Western women have while I think in the world women are still struggling for basic rights and one of those rights is agency, that is, to be able to have subjective an individual power and control on one's own actions in life. And that term "agency" I think is really key in understanding global issues today. Who has it, who doesn't, and why, who has access to agency and who doesn't.

**SB:** And which class are you teaching this semester here?

**CLD:** I am teaching a 200-level course on Topics in Contemporary Women's Studies and Gender Studies. And the specific topic I'm teaching is women under totalitarianism. This is a course that is an intense and comparative analysis of the Italian case and the German case and concentrates mostly on the interwar period. But the course also wants to look more in general at the issue of Right Wing women's movements and their action and agency in society and politics at large. I'm very much fascinated by the idea that in fact women can be not only attracted by patriarchal movements and societies but also active agents in these movements which sometimes actually seem to go against feminist issues and I wonder why, and I think that as feminists we have to ask ourselves how do people, how do other women reason outside of feminism. What do they find attractive about feminism and what do they reject?

**SB:** Why do you think others should be feminists?

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**CLD:** I think both men and women should be feminists. I think that feminism is a highly empowering way of thinking for both men and women because it establishes equality and ... I think at least in this moment in time and in history each individual needs to be responsible and aware of the rights and responsibilities of all gendered beings in society. So I think the feminist approach to such issues is one of critical thinking but also of introspection. And I think that when feminism becomes a practice of life it can be very empowering, especially for young people.

**SB:** And how's your class been like so far? Do you have a big response from your students or is it always lecture?

**CLD:** Um, a mixture, like a seminar format and I think that's what I'm best at. I feel that the lecture format does not allow much in terms of meaningful interaction, and this class is too large to be a seminar. And so I can see that there are some students who are extremely interested and motivated but they don't have much space to come to the fore, and I am always eager to encourage the more silent and shy students, and because of the size of the class they don't always, if they are already shy, they don't, you know, feel encouraged. So I have mixed feelings. But I hope it has left something...

**SB:** What's a book you think everyone should read or what's your favorite book?

**CLD:** Ah. Well, one of my favorite women's writers, one of my favorite authors is Toni Morrison. I think all of her novels are very important for young people to read. I would certainly recommend *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*.

**SB:** Let's see, have you tried any restaurants in Chicago?

**CLD:** Yeah.

**SB:** What are your favorite ones?

**CLD:** Yeah, I, uh, you know, one of my favorite restaurants, I've tried different things. I like to eat something different than Italian because I cook Italian all the time at home. So, an excellent restaurant that I like very much, it's in fact in this area, and it's an Ethiopian restaurant. It's my favorite. It's called [Ethiopian] Diamond. It's on Broadway.

**SB:** Oh yeah. Mhm. Yeah, I've been there.

**CLD:** Yeah, I know it may not be considered typically Chicago, but still, I think it is very much part of the city. Um, what else? I like, well, another favorite spot for me is The Cheesecake factory. [CLD laughs]

**SB:** Yeah. Do you live in this area?

**CLD:** I live in Evanston, yeah.

**SB:** Do you like that little city?

**CLD:** Yes, I do, I do. Because it feels as you said like a small town and not a suburb. Most people think, consider it a suburb of Chicago, but it really isn't. It is a university town with its own identity. My kids actually go to school there and I think it has one of the best school districts in the area if not in the United States. And I really like the atmosphere, the people, the public library, the activities, the community feeling that you have in Evanston.

**SB:** How many kids do you have?

**CLD:** I have two children, two boys. One is 14, the other one is 10. They love it here.

**SB:** And, um, what's your favorite season of the year? [Laughs]

**CLD:** Oh, well, um, spring or summer. [Laughs] No matter what. My kids grew up in Rome. And so they were not used to the weather but they have great memories of winter in Chicago now and they really enjoy it. That's not the same for me. I really love when the city is blooming and I really love the beaches.

**SB:** So are you ready for the, well you're going to be going to California next, so you won't have the rough part of the winter. Let's see, what's something you miss about Rome?

**CLD:** What I miss is being able to stroll in the neighborhood where I live after midnight or 1 o'clock in winter or summer no matter what, it's always filled with people and activities and bars and restaurants and that's something I miss a lot. I miss really being able to reach any location basically either by walking or by public transportation. And I also miss the conviviality. It's completely different. I think it is less formal, um, yeah.

**SB:** Are you a morning or a night person?

**CLD:** I'm a night person, yeah. My husband is a morning person. [Both laugh]

**SB:** Do you drink coffee?

**CLD:** I do. I'm a coffee person also, yeah.

**SB:** What kind of coffee and how do you like it?

**CLD:** I like hazelnut vanilla. The one you smell in the hallway of the office in Piper Hall. That's the American coffee I like. And then I drink Italian I drink Lavazza espresso, my personal coffee,

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the one that I have at home.

**SB:** What's your favorite Italian dish?

**CLD:** Well, you know, yeah, eggplant parmesan. I make it also very good.

**SB:** Yeah, I love eggplant. What's your favorite flower?

**CLD:** Geranium

**SB:** What did you have for breakfast?

**CLD:** Oh, today I had, my husband made pancakes this morning with grated apples. So yeah, that's what I had.

**SB:** Let's see, what are you doing for the holidays? Are you doing anything special for the holidays?

**CLD:** Oh yeah, we're trying to go to New York City. My husband and I met there and married there, got married there, and we have a lot of friends there. So we are planning to actually drive. It's exciting. I like the idea of driving instead of flying. You see more, you enjoy more, and the kids are very excited about that.

**SB:** What's your favorite color?

**CLD:** I like blue and green, the colors of the sea, the colors of the lake. Those are my favorite ones.

**SB:** What's one thing you'd like to try in Chicago before you go to Berkeley?

**CLD:** I was just thinking the other day that before I leave I have to do something special. I have done all the sorts of stuff you can possibly imagine doing in Chicago. The thing I want to do, oh yes, is to go to a basketball game.

**SB:** What is the biggest difference between women in Italy and women in Chicago, or in Rome and Chicago?

**CLD:** Mm, let's see. Well, I think fashion. [Laughs.] I'm always amazed at how, by being away, you lose that sense of fashion. Italian women take care of and are extremely concerned with their appearances. It's something that's made me increasingly uneasy though. Italian women have been too conditioned to look good, appear good. This is something that I'm really critical of now. And so, to be honest, although I really appreciate elegance and beauty, the way in which people make an effort to combine colors and accessories, I also think it can be very dangerous sometimes for women. So what I love about women in Evanston is how they carry themselves with a sense of security and confidence without having to abide by a model of beauty. Fashion and beauty are not as male-dominated in this area as they are in Rome.

**SB:** What political issue has been on your mind lately?

**CLD:** I think the whole financial crisis is very much a concern for me. I've actually just been to the movies to see this documentary *The Inside Job*. It's on the reasons and the causes of the crisis of November 2008. And this is very global, as you may know, Ireland has just been bailed out by the European Union. It's an economic but also a political concern for me.

**SB:** Would you recommend anyone to go to Rome for a visit?

**CLD:** Yeah, sure. Sure, you know, that's the best thing to do. Maybe not move to Rome, it's still very chaotic and sometimes hard, but you still can visit it. Anytime of the year actually.

**SB:** Have you lived in any other parts of the world?

**CLD:** I have experience of, I've traveled and spent time in West Africa, in Senegal in particular which is a Francophone state south of the Sahara, and it is also an Islamic country. It's been extremely informative and important for me to experience a non-Western culture and society. I've also done some fieldwork there among women, Senegalese women, especially those who migrate to Europe, and it's been a great experience. I would recommend students to do that, to try to leave the West, not only to visit Europe but also visit countries that are less central to our culture.

**SB:** What's the difference between Italian students and American students?

**CLD:** European students are overall less dependent on mentorship because they don't have it. The system does not really foster that relationship. There are too many students. The ratio between professors and students is so high that they don't have that direct contact, and so they do it for themselves. I mean, they have to find ways to navigate a fairly complicated system on their own. And so, when on their own, it is like survival of the fittest, so it's really only the best who make it. And when they make it it's impressive. The problem with that is that even if they are more independent on that issue they are also more subservient to the authority of teachers and that does not foster independent thinking. I've found American students to be fairly independent in the way they think although they are less independent on the tasks at hand. They like to be told what to do and to have very clear guidelines. I think that they have

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incredible working skills and work ethics. They are very well-trained in professional skills. In the Italian system there's less connection between the world of studying, the academia, and the professional world.

**SB:** Is there anything else about you that would be interesting for this?

**CLD:** Well, I personally feel that it's been a great experience for me in Women's Studies and Gender Studies. I think you have a very thriving program. I like the way in which people do connect in the program. It is rather uncommon in other universities where I've visited. People, professors and students, really make an effort to be connected. I think it's great. It's great work you do here, congratulations!.



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## "Don't talk about 'it'"

- Cassandra Damm

I am concerned about what happens when we, as individuals and a community, refuse to talk about our bodies and sexuality. I want to know why this is such a difficult topic to address. Is it fear? Discomfort? Laziness? We don't want to offend anyone? Ideally, we could talk about our own experiences of sex and our bodies in a completely open, positive, constructive, accurate, and direct way -- but for starters I propose we all just show up willing to share. In the meantime, these are my thoughts about what happens when we don't talk about sex:

First, if we don't talk about sex, there is no way to get the accurate information we need about all aspects of health and pleasure at every stage of life. Age-appropriate, comprehensive sex education is important because it involves talking about the issues and realities surrounding all aspects of sexuality. In reality, adolescents frequently stop listening to the value judgments of their parents anyway, so the best we can hope is to provide information for empowerment and agency. Not talking about sex (i.e. abstinence only education) does not keep young people from having sex, it just creates a new generation of adults without all the information they need to communicate and make choices about their bodies, desires, and reproductive health.

But this is old news - the Chicago Board of Education passed a comprehensive sex education policy for the Chicago Public Schools some years ago now. In addition, the American Psychological Association, the American Medical Association, and most adults support comprehensive sex education. I bring up sex education because it has a well documented history suggesting that talking about sex directly and realistically is better than pretending that it doesn't happen. Of course, how to talk about it remains problematic at times.

One of the best suggestions I've heard about positive and effective sex education with adolescents is to explain that people should enjoy sex when they choose to have it. Seems counterintuitive, sure, but if we talk about pleasure and empower individuals with the tools to understand their bodies and their needs, then young people (and adults) learn to make choices that feel right to them. And when we take the judgment out of what we do with our genitals, that is all we can hope for.

Second, if we don't talk about bodies and sexuality then we will not have accurate information about sex in the first place. Doctors, sociologists, educators, psychologists, and researchers won't know how to study and understand sexuality if we do not all make an effort to know our own bodies and desires. We cannot educate others when we do not fully educate ourselves, and that starts with communication.

Furthermore, when we don't talk about sex we never confront the discomfort that we experience in that communication. We rob ourselves of the opportunity to explore our bodies and our desires physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. With silence, we perpetuate shame and fear, and often project that shame and fear onto others.

Besides, if the Pope can talk about sex, condoms, and prostitution, then I can. I spent time in the sex industry, I've organized panels of experts to talk about STIs and alternative sexual practices, and I've had intimate sero-discordant relationships. As a result, I know a lot about the practical concerns regarding condoms, HIV, and sex work. I don't have all the answers to all the big questions, but I am here to encourage everybody to open up this dialogue with themselves, their lovers, their friends, their families, and their community. Talking will not solve every issue, but it will allow us to get closer to the answers we need.

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## "I Can Hurt Myself More Than You: When the Political Becomes Personal"

- A Bulimic Lesbian Feminist

### Chapter 1

I consider myself a high functioning woman. I am a young college student with supportive friends, a great part-time job, and a homey apartment. I am known for my intense passion and dedication to the work I do. My boss repeatedly tells me, "You're the woman." I am admired and respected. I am an activist. I am an advocate. I am a radical feminist.

Despite this image, I spend every waking moment obsessing about food. The moment I wake up in the morning, I begin planning my binge for the evening. I leave my apartment early and work through lunch so I can have an excuse for skipping meals. I plan twelve to sixteen hour days so I can starve myself without thinking too much about it. I reward myself after facing a difficult situation by binging and purging. I help everyone else with their problems in order to trivialize my eating disorder.

I present you with this image of me as I find it incredibly ironic that I am a feminist activist with an active eating disorder. A bulimic feminist almost sounds like an oxymoron. Everyday I shame myself with feelings of hypocrisy surrounding my behaviors, because apparently you cannot simultaneously be a feminist and battle an eating disorder. However, this problem is a women's issue.



While men suffer from eating disorders, a disproportionate number of women suffer from them for a variety of reasons. Men have more outlets for control, causing many women to turn to their bodies to assume control. As I possess an excessive need for control and hold myself to painfully perfect standards, I suppose I (along with several other feminists) am a poster child for an eating disorder.

Though I recognize the need and yearn for a dialogue about eating disorders to be created in the feminist community, I am too ashamed to start that dialogue. When the subject arises in my women's studies classes, my heart races and I avoid eye contact with everyone, as if they can see my bulimia. I always want to provide more underlying reasons for eating disorders aside

from the need to be thin, which has nothing to do with my eating disorder. I want to talk about how other women's issues like sexual abuse or homophobia contribute to these behaviors, but then I picture myself binging and purging on my bathroom floor.

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# THE BODY MEGA-ISSUE: PART 2 CONT.

I think of the stash of binge food I used to hide in my room and become too filled with shame to speak up.

As I mentioned earlier, my bulimia stems from an excessive need for control. I convince myself that I am a machine, a powerhouse, and I must keep going above all else. Making myself vulnerable and connecting my activism to my personal experiences is not an option. Bulimia acts as my way of managing this lifestyle. Bulimia seems safer and more comforting than any other option. It acts as a simultaneous best friend and worst enemy—a frenemy. I can always count on becoming still and numb through bingeing and purging; I can always count on feeling empowered by starving myself. I overlook my chest pain, ridiculously low blood sugar, fucked up electrolytes, and teeth cavities for the satisfaction the cycle of bingeing, purging and starving brings me in those moments.

If developing an eating disorder has nothing to do with losing weight, how does it relate to the body? Well, this is the relationship you must have with your body to develop an eating disorder: 1. You have to hate yourself. You have to internalize all of the criticisms people have of you. 2. You have to not give a shit about your body. You can't attribute any sense of respect and worth to your body. 3. You have to feel like you have no control over anything happening in your life. The food you put into your body becomes your only outlet for control. 4. You have to obsess about what you're going to do to your body with food all the time. How many hours have you gone without eating? What are you going to binge on tonight? How are you going to get rid of it? 5. You must completely disregard your health: physical, mental, emotional. You must surrender your health to your eating disorder.

Bulimia is my crutch. It gives me to chance to damage my body in ways that others can't. Food gives me access to my body in a unique way, in a way that people who have taken advantage of me and hurt me don't have. People think they can hurt me, but I can hurt myself so much more. I can hurt myself in ways that no one else can. Coping with certain experiences and enduring specific situations without this crutch seems unimaginable. Without it I would lose the ability to say, "Well, at least I have my eating disorder," when I feel like I have no other hope.

I know that the very thing I use to attain control now has control over me. I know I need to start calling on support and healthier coping mechanisms instead of bulimia, but it's more difficult than I ever thought it would be. Most of the time I feel too ashamed to talk to most people about it. Calling other radical feminists to have them talk me out of engaging in behaviors in moments where all I want to do is binge and purge makes me feel like a failure. No one in the feminist community talks about actually having eating disorders, so why would they understand? I know that eventually I will abandon my crutch and disregard my need for this self-destructive behavior, because I simply have to in order to do what I want to do with my life.

Until I reach that point, my irrational thoughts dictate my actions. On days like today when I manage to function on only yogurt and an apple, I feel powerful. If I think of eating like a normal human being the voice tells me, "You are pathetic. You are hypocritical. You are a failure, a dyke, a disappointment, and you don't deserve to eat a normal meal." This voice controls my actions. It tells me, "You can't eat anything else or you will be completely out of control. If you insist on eating, you should set aside time tonight to binge and purge." It is this voice that allows me to treat my body the way I do.

Just because you may not binge, purge, and starve doesn't mean you can't relate to this voice. Or do you? Are you really that much different than me? What do you do to your body to feel in control?

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## "Reporters should have a Heart"

- Sophia Bairaktaris

**A**s a student journalist, I have an interest in crime reporting, specifically reporting on sensitive crimes such as domestic violence and sexual assaults. I've come to find that these stories are often poorly reported, and few reporters are willing to snatch the assignment.

I've only written and published a couple of articles on the topic. I've had my share of opportunities in interviewing victims and survivors. Those experiences were intense, heart-wrenching and empowering, to say the least.

However, I'm aghast at how personal accounts of trauma and survival can be inadvertently twisted into finger-pointing and blame games on the broadsheet. Rather than asking the who, what, where, when and why of the alleged offender, as readers we are given the victim's 5 Ws, many times with the "how" thrown in for a tap into more readership. The victim is almost hypothetically raped again, this time by the public's curiosity.

Sexual assault is often one of those unmentionables, especially in a college setting. When an article depicting all the fine and vulgar details of the crime is published, readers will flock to it, almost like how it's hard to look away from a car accident. The curiosity is there, naturally. But if the victims or survivors are not the source of that information, it's like forcing the story out of them.

I have read news stories where the victim's whereabouts, activities and actions at the time in question are subject to scrutiny. Graphic details of the crime itself have been published, too. But often times, little is really reported about the alleged offender.

Yes, technically, a lot of that information becomes public record when a crime is reported to the police. However, those details are lost in a database somewhere until reporters dig them out and amplify them hundreds of times on the pages and broadcasts of the news.

As a journalist, I believe in the "Rule of Harm," professed by many in the field. Ask yourself, who will this hurt and who will it help? I believe if more reporters asked themselves this while digging for the story, fewer of them would have published what they did. Ethics should come into play here.

Coverage of such crimes should not stop. To do so would make sexual assault and domestic violence even more taboo. Rather, student journalists should take it upon themselves to become educated and skilled in reporting on crimes like sexual assault and domestic violence. Learning how to interview a victim or survivor is not something that can be mastered in just a classroom setting, unfortunately. It takes much real-life practice.

Finding someone who will talk is the hardest part. Journalists are familiar with rejection, but nothing is more frustrating than knowing a story exists without actually hearing it.

As student journalists, we are told to be objective and independent. I agree with that, but sometimes it's ok to have a heart. The best articles, to me, are those that capture and portray the soul of the people involved. Reporting and writing about bodies as if their actions are moves in a game of chess defeats the purpose of telling the story in the first place.

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## "I Love my body, and I am not an Alien"

- Betsy Redelman

I am a woman, I love my body, and I love food. There, I said it. Food is not my enemy, my refrigerator is not my dark place, and eating cookies and milk at midnight makes me feel blissful and warm, not shameful and fat. For me, eating is not a guilt-trip, but rather an act of love. Appreciating my body is something that both my love of food and feminism have taught me, and I'm proud of that.

Too often, women have distant relationships with their food, seeing it as some horrible evil because their television has been lying to them, telling them that Jessica Alba has a "normal" body since they were 10, which makes their own bodies somehow subpar and in need of a drastic make over. It's like being satisfied with your body in this culture makes you some sort of alien who needs to be punished; and that's just a load of bull shit! My name is Betsy Redelman, I love my body, and I am not an alien.

I'm going to let you in on my love affair with food. Food is something I believe in. Deeply. I see it as powerful, generous and uniting. I believe in the beauty of food because I see it as the common denominator among all human beings.

The fact that I eat connects me to each one of them. It connects me to myself; to the earth; to my mother; to my ancestors. Food connects me to my sisters fighting for their lives and bodies in the Congo; to girls in Pakistan who get acid thrown in their face for trying to go to school; to those affected by mountain top removal in Appalachia. Food connects me to Gandhi; to Mother Teresa; to Albert Einstein.

It connects me to people I don't understand, like George W. Bush and Antoine Dodson. It connects me to the Taliban; to Barbara Streisand; to the guy begging outside the Granville stop. We all have to eat, and I think there's something to that---something powerful.



I feel a deep connection between my womanhood and food. I think it's pretty commonplace for women not to really ever care too much about their own nourishment or health until they are pregnant and directly responsible for their child's sustenance and growth. They do a whole bunch of research, start actually thinking before they put pesticides and chemicals into their bodies, and, hopefully, start taking really good care of their health. I think this is all great and wonderful, but my question is, why don't women have enough self love to do this for themselves in the first place?

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# THE BODY MEGA-ISSUE PART 4 CONT.

It seems like women are constantly making sacrifices for others, taking care of their families and giving love freely to everyone except themselves. Until their health directly affects the well being of someone else, too many women just don't give a sh\*t. It's not a crime for us to love and take care of ourselves, just for our own benefit.

**I feel a deep connection between my womanhood and food. I think it's pretty commonplace for women not to really ever care too much about their own nourishment or health until they are pregnant and directly responsible for their child's sustenance and growth.**

This connection I feel with food--- a lot of it is because I am a woman who one day wants to become a mother. I am in absolute awe of creation. Birth and motherhood will add meaning to who I am as a woman; to who I am as a human. I think it will reconnect me to my fellow sisters who have been mothers for thousands of years; to the man I choose to love and share this with; to the earth; to my body; to myself.

What I find most beautiful about the relationship between my female body and food is that one day, I know that my body will be that vessel of nourishment for another human being. One day, I will be able to nurture my child in the same way that Mother Earth nurtures me. My female body is an incredible living being. Thinking about milk pouring from my breasts and feeding a child one day--- it moves me. It makes me feel blessed to be a woman because one day, I will be able to connect with my child in a way no one else will. I will nourish her. I think this is where I really make the connection between food and feminism. I was blessed with a food producing body and it empowers me.

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## "Fostering Solidarity in the face of Normalcy "

- Yoni Siden

**W**hen first asked to write about intersections between the body and social justice, I immediately thought of the United States' great body freedom fighters: the ubiquitous, famous, infamous, fabulous – Gay Man. From the very naming of homosexuality in Victorian discourse, the bodies of gay men have played a central and titillating role in the development of what is now a socially sanctioned, grammatically capitalized and formalized Gay Male Construct. Today gay masculinities are culturally and socially defined in such a way that they can be co-opted by a mainstream capitalist culture, monetized, and bought and sold as a commodity.

Gay masculinity is the center of television shows and channels (from *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* to the very trivial LOGO), magazines (I lost interest when *The Advocate* showed its true racism by stating that "Gay is the new black"), clothing lines (thank you union-busting American Apparel for your petty handout), and even the dark netherworld of heterosexual female shopping culture (get your Gay Best Friend and credit card, then head to the nearest H & M for tons of un-abandoned fun). And yet, throughout history gay men have served a much different function in our culture. We have not always been used as petty pawns of a heterosexist desire to see 'cool.' No, gay identity has meant resistance for much longer than it has meant shopping partner or purveyor of nice smelling soaps.

It is, of course, important to define the construct "Gay Man." This is more complex than it initially appears. First, I am speaking of the United States, for the particular identity I speak of was developed through historical processes within America and America mores and values.

Second, I am in full recognition that this label carries racial implications. Many people of color find Gay to be an exclusionary and white construct. This I do not deny, but I do challenge. In part, I see racism as a manifestation of dominant culture, a culture that is defined by heterosexuals (read: those with privilege). As such, I believe that revolutionary identities must deconstruct these exclusionary manifestations of privilege. And as such, gay/queer men of color rightly ask if they are included within the construct. To this, I emphatically say that they should be.

Perhaps it goes without saying that I extend this concept to include trans-folk and gender-queers. I do not wish to gloss over the racist and sexist (and classist, etc.) connotations that Gay Man has come to mean, but instead argue that we must reconstitute the identity, drag it away from its adoption (and corruption) by heterosexist culture and go back to the roots of the identity which was formed in a rejection to this.

Further, I do not wish to gloss over the fact that Gay Identity has long been racially exclusive. I am not asking for a return to the racist past, rather I am calling for a return to the revolutionary spirit that Gay was founded on, and then an advancement of this to encompass a rejection of racist, classist, sexist, ableist (etc) realities. But first, some history.

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# THE BODY MEGA-ISSUE: PART 5 CONT.

In 1969 drag queens took to the warm summer streets of New York City to protest the police raids on what was a sacred and austere night. For heaven's sake, JUDY GARLAND HAD DIED (you know, the gay cultural icon)! And nothing comes between gay men and their divas (I once kicked a poor young chap out of a party because he badmouthed Madonna, truly a capital offence). And there, confronted by the bastion of hetero-masculinity, the New York City Police Department, young gay men dressed as women threw up their skirts and taunted the Fuzz. I wonder sometimes what the police thought as these 'sissies' and 'fairies' and 'faggots' threw bricks at them. Perhaps they gained an iota of humility when gazing into the crazed eyes of a fabulous drunk gay man.

The 1970s marked a remarkable rise in gay culture, with public parks being overrun by men looking for sex, bathhouses (businesses designed as meeting places for men to have sex in) becoming social centers of the community, and a burgeoning bar scene rising in prominence. It was fun, it was sexy, and it was gay.

And then, like a ton of bricks, HIV swept the nation and soon men were dead. Clubs emptied, bathhouses shut down, and the culture of pleasure was lost to funerals and near-constant mourning. But this was also a time of great fights and activism. Those sissy men, supported emphatically by lesbian and queer women driven by a sense of justice and solidarity, stood up to the great establishments, the Federal Drug Administration, the Center for Disease Control, the White House, the American Medical Association, drug companies, insurance companies, local hospitals, and demanded change. They held massive protests and pressured the world to hear and see them. They might have been dying, but they put up one hell of a fight. Those men left their hospital beds and fought for their lives. Their bodies marked by the ravages of disease, they raised their voices and fists and fought for action. I am astounded at their courage and their resolve.

And thus, I look at the co-option of gay identities by the media and the heterosexual society at large and ask myself what happened? The twenty-first century brought with it technological and social advancement, but it also brought the death of the subversive gay identity. Gay became a socially regulated image, one that heterosexuals determined for us. Gay men collectively share experiences of being forced into rigid roles of shopping partner or post-breakup comforter, but these roles lack the defining factor of our identity: sexuality. They are sterile roles that we play for the amusement of the mainstream. Even our neighborhood, Boystown, is a Bachelorette Party playground where gay men are routinely asked to perform "Fabulousness" for the hungry eyes of those with privilege.

I demand that we gay men stand up and challenge this! I demand that we define who we are separate from anyone else's perception of us. I demand that we confront racism, classism, and sexism in our community for they are holdovers from an unequal heterosexual culture. I demand that we embrace the redefinition of pleasure we uphold and utilize it for us to lead more fulfilling lives. In short, true justice will come only when the most outlandish is truly celebrated and accepted by the mainstream. I do not wish to be 'normal' if that means sacrificing what makes me whole.

This demand becomes dangerous within some circles, for I in essence as presupposing an argument that men can be oppressed. I argue that gay (and queer) men suffer under heterosexist culture, and must stand in solidarity with other marginalized groups specifically because they are marginalized. I presuppose that penis does not equate

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# THE BODY MEGA-ISSUE: PART 5 CONT.

patriarchy, but rather that it is far more complicated than this.

To fully examine the construction of gay masculinity is beyond the scope of this one essay, but it is essential none-the-less to note that gay men simultaneously benefit from and are oppressed by hegemonic masculinities. Their redefinition of the sexual, and their blending of masculine and feminine, challenges heterosexist understandings of Man that leads to severe violence being perpetrated against them. And as such, we as feminists cannot dismiss gay/queer men simply as manifestations of 'patriarchy;' instead we must view their existence within a liminal space and accept them as partners in the struggle from within. At the same time, gay/queer men must be cognizant of the ways that they still do benefit from masculine privilege and integrate this into their stands of solidarity. Without these two processes happening simultaneously we were remain hopelessly stagnate.

In conclusion, I am calling for three separate, but undeniably interrelated, processes to occur. One, I call for gay men to resist the co-option of gay identity by an oppressive heterosexist culture. Two, I call for gay men (read, those who identify as gay) to define gay identity as a rejection of heterosexist limitations on sexuality but without other oppressive factors that exclude and deny access to other socially marginalized. And three, I call for feminists to recognize that gay men exist within a system of oppression and that they are allies not the enemy. This is predicated on a demand that gay men be cognizant of their privilege, but a simultaneous demand that feminists recognize gay men as existing within a liminal space. In sum, these three processes must occur for true solidarity and revolution to be possible.

**I am not asking for a return to the racist past, rather I am calling for a return to the revolutionary spirit that Gay was founded on, and then an advancement of this to encompass a rejection of racist, classist, sexist, ableist (etc) realities.**

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## "Independence is Happiness"

- Anna Schier

**L**egendary suffragist Susan B. Anthony once said, "Independence is happiness."

A century and a half later, this still rings true, and to me, it always will.

The sentiment that independence is the gateway to empowerment, fulfillment, and, ultimately, happiness, is one that I have always turned to as a source of personal strength. And last week, I chose to transform the emotional and intellectual bond I feel with the idea of self-asserted empowerment into a physical one.

Marching across my left shoulder, in a neat row of typewriter text letters, is a tattoo of the phrase Ms. Anthony uttered so many years ago. It has become my personal mantra, my most essential philosophy, and now, literally, a part of who I am.

To me, "Independence is happiness" does not mean, "You're better off alone." It means, "You choose to be happy," "You are a self-empowering individual," and "You have the strength and the drive to actively determine your life's course." It is a reminder that I am a strong, hard working, and liberated individual, whose ability to create and experience happiness and fulfillment will always reside within herself.



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## "Yours, Mine, and Ours"

- Ida SeferRoche

*Ida was born in Bosnia and moved to Canada as a refugee with her family in 1992. At the age of fifteen she moved to Chicago with her family. She received her undergrad in Physics at North Central College and is now in the MSW Dual Degree program at Loyola University. She hopes to one day teach Gender and Women's Studies hopefully somewhere warmer than Chicago.*

Michael sat there on the phone trying to reason with his dad while I not-so-secretly tried to listen in on the conversation without interrupting. Although I have to say I was getting very riled up. The conversation was getting fairly intense as Michael tried to lighten the mood by saying "Dad, how else am I going to smash the patriarchal bullshit?" His joke was met with dead silence from his father. It was obvious his father was not amused. His father repeated, "Men don't do this Michael. What are other people going to think? This is going to be such an embarrassment." Michael looked down, gripping the phone in his hand. The lack of acceptance by his father was obviously hurtful, and by this point in the conversation I had to walk out of the room in order to avoid getting involved.

So what could have made Michael's dad so furious? What could Michael have said that would make his father feel embarrassment and the need to enforce ideals of masculinity and to question Michael's manhood? This manhood that was built on the foundation of family lineage. Michael responded to his father by saying, "I'm doing this for myself, I'm creating something new." He was quickly cut off by his father who retorted back loudly enough that I could hear it in the next room, "Michael, real men don't change their last names, that is what women do." This conversation was one of many regarding the biggest commitment that Michael and I made to each other, the commitment of changing our last names.

### The Wedding

Michael and I got married on July 18th, 2009 after 6 years of dating and a 2-year engagement. As soon as we got engaged we started discussing wedding traditions and which wedding traditions we thought were extremely oppressive. So to keep our sanity during the wedding planning we set up some wedding ground rules:

1. The wedding would not cost more than \$10,000.00
2. Our wedding party would be small, so like four people
3. The wedding dress would be rented not bought
4. I, as the woman, would not be given away by my father
5. There would be no mention of religion or God at the wedding ceremony

We were both aware of how weddings are just another way to commodify relationships, so we thought by setting up a limit on how much was going to be spent we could at least cut down the influence of money on our relationship. We also wanted to keep the wedding party small to keep costs down and not force anyone who had to participate in our wedding madness to spend a lot of money. We decided that I should rent my dress rather than spending five hundred dollars on a dress I would only wear once. We also decided that I would not be given away solely by my father. We both thought this tradition was too symbolic of a woman's commodification within the ceremony so we got rid of that idea.

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# THE BODY MEGA-ISSUE: PART 7 CONT.

Lastly and most importantly we decided that there would be no mention of religion or God during the ceremony. I grew up Muslim and Michael grew up Jewish, and my mother is Christian Orthodox, while Michael's father is Irish Catholic. There would have been no happy medium had we picked one religion or the others. But truthfully, Michael and I both thought that there was no reason for God to participate in the ceremony, if God was everywhere. Because just like our parents, brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandmas and grandpas, God would have to take a chair and just watch the exchange of vows for what they are, an exchange between me and Michael -- not me, Michael, and God.

And what the both of us learned during our year and a half of planning is that when it comes to family, some things you can't even begin to compromise. The wedding went from



roughly 100 guests to 270 guests. Meaning the reception totaled seventeen thousand dollars, and that was not including the flowers that cost \$2000, the invitations that we had to order twice that cost \$1600, and the photographer and videographer who cost \$3500. Just as the guest list grew and the wedding costs surmounted our expectations, so did our wedding party. The wedding party eventually included five groomsmen; one bridesmaid, Michael's sister Lucy; six bridesmaids; a flower girl; and a female ring bearer. I ended up giving in to my mom who thought a rented wedding dress was a certain curse for a new marriage and I bought an \$1800 dress that I had to be cut out of because I felt like I was suffocating by two in the morning.

There were some things that we chose not to budge on, mainly the no-religion rule and not being given away by my father. Our friend Brian got a certificate online from some church in California so that he could marry people legally. We talked to him about officiating our wedding and he created a fantastic ceremony for us with no mention of religion or God. Because he was not technically a religious official or a judge, we felt that Brian was our equal and not someone who had any sort of power dynamic over us. I have to say initially I thought that maybe it wouldn't work legally, but it was totally legitimate. We received our marriage license three weeks after the wedding.

I also did not get to walk down the aisle with just my dad, I walked with my mom and dad, and Michael walked with his parents. This was our way of showing off the people who raised us and participated in helping our relationship. We wrote our own vows and made

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realistic promises to each other. We didn't vow to love each other for the rest of our lives because that seemed like an extremely empty promise. We did promise to work at becoming better partners and supporting each other in our dreams and aspirations. The ceremony lasted less than fifteen minutes and then the party began.

## Changing Our Names

When we initially spoke about last names and marriage traditions, I was sold on the idea of just keeping my own last name, because it is a part of me. Changing that part of me would be like giving away a part of my history, something very important to me. For the first six years of my life I lived in Bosnia, and I identify as a Bosnian Muslim. What was extremely significant about my last name was that it carried with it my Bosnian culture. At first, changing my last name seemed unreasonable because as a refugee in America I had assimilated in many ways, but this assimilation was unreasonable to me. I definitely understand that my last name came from my father, and from his father and so on, but this last name had become a part of me. It was not my father's any longer; this last name was mine, and I was not about to throw it away.

A couple of months after our engagement Michael and I had a conversation about what would happen if we had children. This is where the flaw of us keeping our last names finally came to show its ugly head. Would we name our children, with the Roche last name or the Sefer last name? Or would the children have a hyphenated last name? Would the boys have the Roche last name and the girls have the Sefer last name? Or vice versa? None of the combinations that we came up with made any sense, and none of them worked for us.

One day Michael came up with the idea of combining our last names by having Sefer and Roche meshed together so it would be SeferRoche for these imaginary children that we were eventually going to have. And I thought, "Well why don't we do that ourselves?" We decided on SeferRoche as the last name we were both going to take after we got married, with the capitalized second "R". This second capital is there so that Michael's last name does not get lost within this ten letter name we had created. It was important to Michael that his identity does not get erased by this transition either.

So we spent two years before the wedding, informing people that we are going to change our last names, including our close relatives. We were preparing them for a radical transition. Not so much for me, but more so for Michael. Obviously because I am a woman, people expect me to change my last name. So here Michael was on the phone trying to explain to his dad yet again his reasoning for changing his last name, and his dad was not hearing it. His father's main argument was that this was very anti-man, and how would his last name get passed on if now he had a new last name?

Michael and I talked about this afterwards and he thought his dad was being irrational but understood why his father was upset. Michael was the first grandson who carried on the Roche last name out of a dozen grandchildren. When Michael was born, his mom and his dad's side of the family all praised his mother for giving birth to a son and basically treated him like he was golden. By Michael changing his last name, he wasn't just changing a couple of documents, he was disrupting a family tradition. Most importantly, he was breaking down the family lineage and that was very upsetting to his father.

Michael's mom and my mom thought this was a very neat idea and encouraged our creativity. On the other hand, my father also expected me to keep my last name when I got married. Though as soon as I told him how we were going to combine the two last names, he thought that was a fantastic idea. But he did ask me, "What happens to the family history now?", because if anyone were to search for the history of this last name, there would not be any. So I decided to create a family tree, one from my family and one for Michael's family. This was so there would be a record of where we came from in case anyone in the future wanted to know.

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What made the process more difficult to accomplish was how we had to change our last names. Had I decided to take Michael's last name at the wedding, that paperwork would have been finalized at the ceremony and I would have just had to go to the DMV and the social security office to update my new last name. Being that the both of us were changing our last names, we had to go to court to get them changed. This means we had to first go downtown and file paperwork for a petition, and then get someone who was not related to us to be a witness. We had to make sure that our name change was published in a newspaper, and lastly, we had to pay roughly \$400 to get all this paperwork processed. Had I just changed my last name it would have only cost about fifty dollars. Despite all that trouble and having to take a day off of work to go to court to change our last names, the court process was very quick and painless. The female judge thought that it was a great idea and she wished us luck before we left.

After court, we went straight to the DMV to change our IDs. Michael looked at his ID after it had just been freshly printed and said "this seems more legitimate than getting married." I agreed. This name change seemed more permanent, like a final commitment to each other. It was as if our marriage and ceremony were just there for our guests to see us display our commitment to each other. This name change was essentially a new ceremony, one that was more powerful than marriage. And our vow to each other during this name change ceremony was to preserve the new family we had created by the name change. This new family had roots in our separate Sefer/Dobric and Roche/Chmielewski families but the difference was that our new last name was ours -- not my dad's, not my mom's, not his dad's, and not his mom's, but mine and Michael's.

After the DMV we went to the social security office to finalize changing our names on our social security cards. We walked in and the security man at the front asked "How can I help you?" and Michael said "We're here to change our last name". The security guard was taken aback and said, "Why?" To which Michael replied, "We got married." And the security guard said "Oh, you are changing your last name" pointing to me. I replied, "We're both changing our last names." He finally asked, "He is changing his last name? Why?" Michael replied, "Because I got married." The security guard was stunned. He gave us our numbers and told us to sit down. He looked fairly shocked. This type of reaction has been pretty typical of most men who have asked Michael about his last name. Michael claims that there has not been one woman who thought his name change was strange, everyone thought something positive about it.

Our name change is much more permanent than our marriage. While the majority of women through history have experienced this permanence, I think the way Michael experienced this was very eye opening. Because had I just taken his last name he would have never known how it would feel to have his identity compromised for the sake of marriage. While for some people the name change we chose might seem patriarchal, restrictive and perhaps pointless, it means something to us. The two of us created something new that no one in the world has, a brand new last name. In a sense, this last name solidified our commitment to be a family as the two of us, rather than have our family be defined by the children we have. I know that our formula wouldn't work for everyone, but it does work for us and that's what matters. Lastly our last name is a way that we can belong to each other and belong solely to ourselves at the same time without compromising our commitment or our identities, and that is the best way we can honor the love we feel towards each other.

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## "The Reasons"

- Elizabeth Greenwood

**T**he knowledge that I am just another American notch on your beautiful foreign bed post.

The fact that your girlfriend never found out, and that she never will, and not because her and I don't speak the same language, but because she'll never ask you about it, even if someone tells her. Because you treat her like shit, probably worse than you treated me. That she drives you around in her tinted-windows BMW because you tell her to, and because she starves herself for you and lets you kiss her with your disgusting mouth, you were such a bad kisser. Because she knows that you do this to her every semester, and you act like you're so uninvolved with it all.

Because of you- your eyes and their eternal milky way color, your smooth hazelnut skin and the way your red religious talisman looks against it, your spirituality, your bitter criticism of the United States and its foreign policy, your objectification of my body, that sexy tattoo below your ankle bone, your good-looking older brother, the meaning of your name, your laziness, your talent for photography, your voice, your endless sense of entitlement, and the fact that everyone still liked you even after they all knew.

Because you got under my skin enough that I let you in like I did. Because I was a sucker for it all. Because I let you into my bed. Because you let your friends criticize my intellect but not before you criticized it first. Because you were the first person who didn't give two shits about me, my sexuality, or my body that I let into my bed, into my being. Because I was high when it happened. Because there's not a thing I can do about it now. And because nothing has changed, you or the way you treat women.

These are all the reasons why you made my skin crawl, and, in some very small and set aside part of me, you still do. And I hate that you still get any of me, because you never deserved any of it.



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## "Queer Chicago Burlesque: The 1901 Gallery"

- Brandie Madrid

**A**lthough I have seen a number of burlesque shows in Chicago over the past several years, I keep hoping to encounter more events like those that have been hosted at the 1901 Gallery for about a year. The shows are often a combination of house performers and guests, often from other Chicago burlesque troupes like Girlie-Q. The combination of performers, audience members and the space itself create a queer-centric community of approachable, excited, inclusive women, men and genderqueers.

Starting at midnight in a 50-seat garage-space-turned-theatre with a low ceiling and black walls, the 1901 Gallery has a distinct atmosphere. Run by Eliza Stockfish and Ms. Vine with the help of their partners Johnathan Stitch and Giusef Volium, 1901 is a subtly marked space at the corner of Belmont and Wolcott. The midnight start time adds an air of Rocky Horror-fandom, paralleling the common showtime for the movie that has become a ritual event for outcasts, theater geeks, Goths, and the like. The same can be said of fans of burlesque at 1901: they come as much for the oddities of the show -- the various body types and styles (just like the ugly/beautiful characters of Rocky Horror), the good-natured heckling (which is what keeps most Rocky fans coming back week after week), and the costumes -- as they do for the sexual titillation.

This space certainly qualifies as a sex public as defined in the first paragraph of Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner's essay "Sex in Public": a place that has "an obvious relation to sex...., organized around sex, but not necessarily sex acts in the usual sense: queer zones and other worlds estranged from heterosexual culture." To the casual observer, some heteronormative elements seem to appear like the objectifying gaze at women (which here is celebrated as empowering) in often-traditionally-sexy strip outfits (which here are often queered by usage or over-usage of crystals, feather, animal prints, boy-cut panties or even briefs on women, other gender-bending attire, rainbow colors, etc.) These shows also create a sex public as defined by Berlant and Warner in that they are "not just a safe zone for queer sex but the changed possibilities of identity, intelligibility, publics, culture, and sex that appear when the heterosexual couple is no longer the referent or the privileged example of sexual culture."

Because men are rarely on stage, the performances are usually either solo women or genderqueers or a group of non-males interacting with each other. As a result of this, the atmosphere is usually lesbian or queer in nature, and the "heterosexual couple" may only be represented in the crowd if at all. Many of the jokes, show titles, themes, and performers' names are references to queer culture. Although straight people and straight culture are not shunned, they are also not the focus of these shows.

The performers seem to enjoy themselves no matter the size of the crowd, as long as the crowd is enjoying themselves. Before, after, and at the mid-show break, many of the performers stand out front with the attendees for smokes, compliments and chatter. This attentiveness and intimacy goes a long way toward building both a fan-base and a community that penetrates the wall many burlesque performers build up and keeps their fans coming to as many shows as possible.

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# THE BODY MEGA-ISSUE PART 9

Like roller derby players, the performers tend to have pun-based names that are both badass and sexy. The events held on October 15 and 16, 2010 called "In the Dark: Happy Horny Halloween" included characters such as: Scarlett DeVille, Titty Perkins, and Candy Cadaver. The trend for these shows, even when Halloween and other holidays are far from sight, is to include acts and performers who dabble in fake bloodplay, BDSM, and other things that would not be seen at most hetero-centric burlesque shows.

The 1901 Gallery embodies some of the same principles that queer theorist Gayle Rubin describes in "The Catacombs: A temple of the butthole": "by fostering an attitude of respect for difference, the parties created a comfortable atmosphere in which diverse populations could observe one another, appreciate their mutual interest in kink, and discover what they did have in common." People of various genders, orientations and interests show up at 1901, and they are all welcome as long as they respect the space and the performers. In fact, straight men, while perhaps less able to hit on the performers during breaks, nonetheless heighten the mood with their loud, enthusiastic catcalls. While women often feel emboldened to holler at the performers while onstage, it appears that men, especially when in groups, can add another level of frenzy that can be infectious to the performers.

Ms. Bea Haven describes the typical audience: "The crowd tends to be somewhat diverse, with a heavy emphasis on people who don't "fit" in terms of the mainstream. They are all ages, races, and sexualities. It tends to skew more heavily towards straight dudes, but with the previously mentioned "outside of the mainstream" skew, these guys tend to be cool, shy, and sort of overwhelmed at the idea that they get to participate in something as sexy as burlesque." This diversity and inclusion are part of what make the 1901 burlesque shows so exciting: they allow a variety of people to come and participate in voyeurism and exhibitionism which is only heightened by that diversity.

The thing I love best about the burlesque shows at the 1901 Gallery is the performers' lack of inhibitions. During the second or third act of my virgin experience at 1901, the gender-queer performer Queerella Fistalot ended her strip by pulling off her panties and running around the stage for a length of time completely nude. Neither my date nor I (nor many of the other attendees, apparently) had ever seen anything like that during a burlesque performance or any other live show. Because many of the other performers watch the show when they are not onstage, the rest of the night was filled with many other performers removing that last taboo article of clothing, the panties.

At the end of the show, almost every performer, even those who had left their panties on during their act, removed their underwear and exposed their ass, mooning the entire audience during the grand finale bows. Although this is not necessarily a custom of every show, it was wonderful to see a group of performers --not all affiliated with the same troupe -- allowing themselves to be as risqué as they wanted to be, caught up in a flurry in hormones, flying clothes, and a roaring, sweaty crowd of 50 or more. Never before or after have I witnessed such a steady stream of hooting, hollering, and catcalls, especially when the temperature and humidity in that renovated garage had to have rivaled Miami in July.

The reason the 1901 Gallery can allow "the final reveal" is because it does not serve alcohol. Besides this legal loophole, I believe some of the catalysts for this experience were Queerella's brazen punk-rock attitude and the large number of boisterous men in the audience. Their catcalls and responses to the MC, as well as their enthusiasm during and after each performance, excited the crowd and the performers. The MC (here and at most other burlesque shows) always mentions that the more daring the audience members are with their decibel level, the more the women want to take off. This was definitely proven true that night, especially since Queerella's full monty was likely inspired in part by the volume

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# THE BODY MEGA-ISSUE: PART 9 CONT

and enthusiasm of the crowd. Her body is lithe and girlish while her attitude is reckless and fierce. So although she is genderqueer, the straight-seeming men went crazy for her.

The performers and other people affiliated with these shows often become friends if they do not already know each other. Ms. Bea Haven relates that they do many things together outside of the shows like "have dinners together, craft together, do clothing swaps, hang out and watch movies." They also make friends with their fans, and for those fans who were already friends, the shows allow them to stay in touch and create deeper intimacies. The acts performed on and offstage allow everyone to take part in something queerer, sexier, and more exhibitionist than is usually offered during burlesque shows or is shared among most mixed groups of friends and strangers.

This sense of community and expression is described in great detail by Titty Perkins, Queerella Fistalot, and Ms. Bea Haven in their emails. Haven has been performing and teaching burlesque for many years, and many of the burlesque dancers in Chicago (and elsewhere) have been taught by or at least performed with her. Thus it was heartening to read these words by her: "1901 refreshed burlesque for me. In general, burlesque has been a catty, horrible community for me....There is not much community around burlesque in Chicago these days. It used to be a lot different, but 1901 has reminded me that there ARE good people out there doing this performance work, that I CAN find kindred spirits in this work, and my performance work WILL be better with [the] ability to conduct creative experiments in this field."

Queerella is much newer to the burlesque community, but she still had this to say about 1901: "I love Johnathan, E, Giusef and Vine, because they don't just book you, pay you and rush you out the door. They take the outcasts and turn them into royalty." It seems from these emails and my experiences at the 1901 gallery that the space and the show is a sex public as well as a community, and both those roles go hand in hand to create a unique event for the queer community and its allies that is empowering, inviting, and sexy. The intimacies and relationships that come out of that space may be felt within the larger queer community as well as by the straight people who witness the shows. Perhaps they take away a little something each time and find new ways to explore their own sexuality or their potential queerness.



Queerella Cinderella

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## "Snoop Dogg's Perceptions of Hypermasculinity"

- Victoria Kolbuck

**H**ip hop and rap music are heavily-scrutinized art forms due to pervasive themes and images of aggressive male behavior and posturing, encouragement of drug use, promotion of gang lifestyles, and objectification of and violence towards women. These images support hegemonic masculinity and truly move towards hypermasculinity in which possessing a tough exterior and inciting fear in others are the main objectives. Snoop Dogg is an artist that at times appears to promote hypermasculinity through exhibiting various cultural norms in both his songs and music videos, but there are several examples of his deviation from these norms. Additionally, in order to analyze Snoop Dogg's portrayal of cultural norms it is necessary to examine his background and experience as a gang-affiliated youth, examples of which are evident in his body of work.



Snoop Dogg, originally named Cordozar Calvin Broadus Jr., spent his childhood and young adulthood in Long Beach, California where he was arrested several times for drug possession and alleged affiliations to the Crips, a Los Angeles gang (Erlewine, 2010). As a young African-American man growing up in this environment, Snoop Dogg was undoubtedly subject to the cultural norms for masculinity that this lifestyle dictated which were discussed in Byron Hurt's film "Hip Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes". Jackson Katz describes posturing as using one's body as a means to convey individual power as African-American men lack corporate and political power and thus need other methods for exerting power. Overall, Snoop Dogg's music videos tend to lack this posturing though he does exhibit this behavior in the music video "The Next Episode" where he faces the camera and makes several hand and arm gestures which serve to make his body appear larger than he actually is ("The Next Episode", 1999).

It is noteworthy that this song is in collaboration with rappers Dr. Dre, Kurupt, and Nate Dogg, all of whom also use posturing throughout the video. This may indicate that Snoop Dogg's deviation from not demonstrating this behavior may be in response to performing with other rappers which perpetuates the concept of exerting power over other individuals. Conrad Tillard, a hip-hop minister, discusses his experience of seeing African-American father punch their sons in the chest and telling their sons they must be prepared for violence ("Hip Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes", 2006). This supports R.W. Connell's view that violence is a prominent part of the culture of masculinity, and that violence is always warranted when started by another man (Connell 99, 2005). This theme is depicted in the music video "Vato" where Snoop Dogg's character is shown as being harassed by gang

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members until Snoop Dogg obtains a gun and shoots them, and the final scene shows him in prison ("Vato", 2009). "Vato" exemplifies this idea of justifying violence started by others by first separating Snoop Dogg from the gang members in both dress and demeanor, distinguishing Snoop Dogg as not obviously gang affiliated as he does not wear the colors the other men are wearing, and he does not make posturing movements like the other men. These distinctions only serve to indicate Snoop Dogg is more powerful than these men in terms of violence and not in his ability to resist the violence these men are inciting.

Homicide and gang lifestyles are also cultural norms for masculinity which are present in Snoop Dogg's videos and music. Snoop Dogg provides insight into his childhood neighborhood as he depicts gang life in the song and the corresponding animated music video entitled "10 Lil Crips." The lyrics in this song contain the lines, "look into a mind of a nigga that's crazy/ Seventeen years old and still a baby/ Gangstas real, they pop the pill/ You cap back, young motherfucker it's like that" (Rap Basement, 2010). These lyrics discuss 17 year-old gang members involved in shootings, participating in the roles of both the shooter and the target.

The video is an animated piece which depicts members of the Crips, the gang Snoop Dogg was allegedly affiliated with, involved in shootings and robberies which may appear to simply portray images of cultural norms but it appears Snoop Dogg is really attempting to provide insight into his background ("10 Lil Crips", 2006). The message "10 Lil Crips" conveys is that while Crips members are frequently murdered, there are many more recruited to take the deceased Crips' places. Snoop Dogg states this in a matter-of-fact way instead of really indicating strong emotion which further shows that he is using this song to explain his background which may, in turn, explain why he has incorporated these negative cultural norms into his music and videos. Snoop Dogg has also been arrested for crimes ranging from drug possession to murder which may appear that he is embodying some of these norms to create his persona, but it is more likely that his drug possession charges indicate a substance abuse problem (Erlewine, 2010).

Images of objectification of women are prevalent in Snoop Dogg's songs and music videos which correspond to cultural norms of masculinity, though individuals interviewed in "Hip Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes" discuss these themes as being seen as less important issues in the African-American community ("Hip Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes, 2006). The majority of Snoop Dogg's music videos contain images of women wearing little clothing who are objectified by the rappers in the videos. "Hip Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes" also discussed women who participate in perpetuating misogyny yet do not believe labels such as "bitches" or "hos" applies to them which, in turn, causes these women to not speak out against these labels ("Hip Hop", 2006).

This view is often supported by the women in Snoop Dogg's music videos who appear to be interested in the rappers performing, and many appear to be using their bodies in order to gain the rappers' attention. This supports Connell's argument of compulsory heterosexuality which is the compulsion of women to make themselves sexually available to men because they feel society demands they do so (Connell 104, 2005).

In spite of these many instances of Snoop Dogg's apparent displays of embracing cultural norms through song lyrics and music videos, there are also examples of his challenging these norms. One of Snoop Dogg's more popular songs, entitled "Sexual Seduction," was originally entitled "Sexual Eruption." Snoop Dogg changed the title and lyrics of this song based on demand from the record label producing the album ("Sensual Seduction," 2007). Changing the lyrics of this song drastically changes the song's content, which was originally a song detailing the rapper's attempt at helping his female partner reach orgasm, and it is essentially a praise of female sexual pleasure. The change in lyrics to "Sensual Seduction" transformed the song into a predatory-sounding song about pursuing a woman

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as if she is an object to be conquered, though Snoop Dogg uses the lyrics to imply the female is not yet aware that she wants to be seduced and it is his "duty" to enlighten her ("Sensual Seduction," 2007). Though Snoop Dogg eventually succumbed to the record label's demands to change the content of the song, the original song promoted positive attitudes toward female sexuality.

Additionally, Snoop Dogg has appeared in interviews with his family to raise awareness about Lupus, a disease that affects his daughter. In an appearance on The View, Snoop Dogg discussed donating money to a Lupus research foundation ("The View," 2010). This philanthropic effort conflicts with cultural norms of displaying wealth as a way to show power and indicate success ("Hip Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes," 2006). Snoop Dogg and his wife, Shante Broadus, discussed their support of Lupus research as a way to help their daughter, though Snoop Dogg also attributed improvements in his daughter's condition to the amount of love in their household ("The View," 2010). Here his candid discussion conflicts with hegemonic masculinity and hypermasculinity by demonstrating love and care for his family (Connell 132, 2005). Though Snoop Dogg's lyrics and music videos often demonstrate cultural norms promoting hypermasculinity, some of these images may be an attempt to demonstrate his experience growing up in a gang infested neighborhood as a child in an effort to raise awareness to the reality of living in a world which surrounded him with examples of hegemonic masculinity.

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## Cover Artist on: "Esmeralda 87"

- snowlion

*Dear Voyeur,*

*I am glad you could be let into my world of fierceness, genderplay and correspondence. Really the best way to learn about the language of a culture is by means of full submersion. This is what I did with the selected part shared with you today.*

*If you would like to know more or join the dialogue and propaganda, please e-mail :  
snowlionwritings@gmail.com*



**E**smeralda,

Tears have watered this oak. These tears brought me to smell England's rains with a saturation that was so deep it redirected a systemic past of compromise .

But before England I thought was doomed, my embryonic being steeped in phallic false logic, the mechanics of ghost's motion taking ground, of body language having made me predisposed to someones else's paradigm. Yet I didn't have a endowment of heritage and education of substance. Being able to dance to the waves of the waltz was just like looking at the stars. Esmeralda I had lots of passion, and no rudder. Yet I have found a way to take control and slow down the minute hand. I took control the of waltz's metronome and took control of my own steps, of my own fate. I learned how to turn stars into fate.

Light's heritage, her endowment of rhythm, her cadence to be able to dance to the waves of the waltz, she and I are very much alike. At first, she had not yet arrived as a sister. I am sure you remember about all of this passion Esmeralda, but I was mimicking light's moves, I was making her a fatalistic idol. At first, I just followed for the sake of the security of her shadow. But now, I have found a way to slow down the minute hand, the waltz's metronome, and learn light's lessons and how the relate to me instead of making her story my story.

The air of gender, I wake up to her, I sleep to him, my lover and ever presence taking back time for my victory. Many just dance; no, not dance. They move more like drones to an out of tune brittle oak piano. It is gender, Esmeralda, that has helped me to find and love myself. Some only see it as my hunchback of Notre Dame making foreign

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# THE BODY MEGA-ISSUE: PART II CONT

shadows with an echoing tone resonant both of a man and a woman and neither at the same time.

The kinship of light and gender is something I have always heard of in terms of should and shouldn't. Time has taken on a more honest path now, less grids without corrosive sewers , less shoulds and shouldn'ts, now more streams that keep the water moving and pure. Thinking about who I am , and who I want seems to be more tangible in these terms Esmeralda , the streams of identity have left me more on an open adventure instead of traffic hour, stuck in the predetermined gender roles, with too many red lights.

Esmeralda I know you have taught me better. How does the wind feel on your skin- on the other side of the bridge ? I wonder if I could visit you some time but alas I have my own mountains to climb. I honestly don't know what is on the other side. It really doesn't matter, just the fact that I have done a feat of this measure will remind me of my potential , of my strength.

Could you please smell the coniferous for me ? For sake of splendor of their verdant life through when light shows the self less.

Waiting for moon to pass  
One must not get caught in the undertow.

-snowlion

*\* Stay tuned for snowlion's additional collection of art and reflection in future Digests.*

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# WSGS EVENTS

## **Talk Sex (in small groups)** Monday, December 6 at 7 p.m

Sponsored by CARE | Quinlan Life Sciences Building, Room 412 | Contact: Yoni at jsiden@luc.edu

## **"Happy Hour" with Prudence Moylan\*** Tuesdays from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Calling all WSGS graduate students! Prudence Moylan, the WSGS Graduate Studies Director, invites you to 2nd floor Piper Hall for snacks, coffee, tea, and scintillating conversation. Join Prue and WSGS graduate students for chit-chat and words of wisdom.

\*Note: this meeting is not related to nor centered around alcohol.



# CAMPUS EVENTS

## **Winter Dance Informance** Friday, December 10 at 7:30 p.m. in Mullady Theatre

Support Loyola's community of dance students at the Winter Dance Informance. Dance students from all classes and levels will showcase their work this semester in this informal dance performance. Tickets range from \$7-15 and will be available at [www.luc.tix.com](http://www.luc.tix.com). Contact the Box Office at 773.508.3847.

## **Cadence Call for Submissions** The submission deadline: Tuesday, March 1, 2011

Attention: painters, photographers, writers, drawers, poets, artists of all kinds.

For those who may not know, Cadence is Loyola University's annual literary and art publication, printed in full color every spring, and featuring exceptional works of student art and literature.

Any work of art or literature that can be printed on the page will be considered for publication. This includes, but is not limited to: poetry, prose, plays, screenplays, essays, photography, painting, drawing or any combination of these things.

What we are looking for is simple: Artwork and literature that is skillfully crafted and original.

We want your best work, and we want to give you enough time to make it your best. So spend some time this winter making something great, and send it to [lucadence@gmail.com](mailto:lucadence@gmail.com).

Email any questions/concerns to [lucadence@gmail.com](mailto:lucadence@gmail.com)

## **Why Art Matters** Until January 22, 2011

Ralph Arnold Fine Arts Annex

Why Art Matters is a student art advocacy project exhibiting works of art.

No tickets or reservations are necessary for this exhibition.

## **Take a Deep Breath - Weekly Mindfulness Meditation** Mondays 4:30-5:30 p.m.

Instruction for new members from 4:30-4:45 p.m. at the Wellness Center

September 13th through December 6th

Learn how to meditate and incorporate it into your daily life! Sessions are ongoing, newcomers welcome.

Contact Dianna at 508 2544 for more information or join us any Monday at the Wellness Center.

## **Dating Violence Support Group**

If you've experienced violence in a dating or intimate relationship, you're not alone. This drop-in support group, led by the YWCA Evanston-North Shore, will allow survivors of dating violence to connect with others in a supportive and caring environment. For more information, contact the Wellness Center. To visit the Wellness Center website go to <http://www.luc.edu/wellness/>

## **Open Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) Meeting** Fridays 4:00-5:00 p.m.

CFSU, Chamber Room (lower level).

For anyone who desires to stop drinking, AA provides a fellowship of men and women with the primary purpose of staying sober and helping other alcoholics achieve sobriety. For more information contact Kevin K. at 773-508-3515.

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# LOCAL EVENTS

## **Dreams in Orbit: Girls, Science, and Space in Cold War America and the Soviet Union**

Friday, February 4, 3-5 p.m.

Newberry Library, 60 West Walton Street, Chicago, IL

Roshanna P. Sylvester, DePaul University | Commentator: Joe Austin, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Newberry will pre-circulate papers to those planning to attend.

E-mail [scholl@newberry.org](mailto:scholl@newberry.org), or call (312) 255-3524 to receive a copy of the paper.



# VOLUNTEER

## ***Stay tuned for new postings in future Digests!\****

\* If you have a volunteer posting for students, staff, and the community, contact [kberg@luc.edu](mailto:kberg@luc.edu)



# INTERNSHIPS

## ***Stay tuned for new postings in future Digests!\****

\* If you know of available internships, please contact [kberg@luc.edu](mailto:kberg@luc.edu)

The only jobs for which no man is qualified are  
human incubators and wet nurse. Likewise, the only  
job for which no woman is or can be qualified is sperm  
donor.

- Wilma Scott Heide

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# CAREERS

## Victim Advocacy Coordinator, Women's Resource Center Northern Illinois University

Deadline: applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

We are seeking a dynamic candidate for the position of Victim Advocacy Coordinator, reporting to the Women's Resource Center to provide comprehensive institution-wide direct services to the NIU community in the form of advocacy, crisis intervention and referrals for student victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking on campus. This position is responsible for assisting with programmatic coordination of the Women's Resource Center Grant to Reduce Violence Against Women on Campus through the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women. The Victim Advocacy Coordinator will work closely with the grant consultants from Safe Passage and the DeKalb County State's Attorney's Office to coordinate advocacy services for student victims and to develop training materials and conduct training sessions for campus police, judicial board members, graduate assistants, and teaching assistants. The Victim Advocacy Coordinator will also serve as a member of campus response teams. This position is grant-funded for a period of three years. Requirements: Master's degree in Women's Studies, Public Health, Sociology, Social Work, Higher Education or a related field is required, as is completion of advocacy training approved by a state-wide domestic violence or sexual assault agency and at least one year of related work experience. Contact Name: Shirley Mashare, e-mail: [smashare@niu.edu](mailto:smashare@niu.edu)



# ACADEMIC FUNDING

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*How good does a female athlete have to be before we just call her an athlete?*

- Author Unknown

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# LEARNING

## Loyola Service Learning Program in Lima, Peru

[http://www.luc.edu/studyabroad/summer\\_peru.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/studyabroad/summer_peru.shtml)

Spend your summer making a difference and using your Spanish conversation skills on the Peru Service-learning Program! With service placements in the health, education and social service field, this program is ideal for students who want an intensive immersion experience in Latin America but cannot devote an entire semester. In English-taught classes, you will learn about the political and social dynamics shaping Peru's successful but uneven development while also getting hands-on experience in affected and impoverished Lima communities. Centered in the country's capital, the program also takes to you Peru's beaches, jungles and mountains on weekend excursions. The optional post-program trip to Machu Picchu and Cuzco is also not to be missed! Please feel free to contact Amye Day in the Office for International Programs at [aday1@luc.edu](mailto:aday1@luc.edu) if you have any questions about the program.

## Summer 2011 Faculty-led Travel Course: Tunisia, Africa

Application Deadline: March 21

### SUMMER TRAVEL COURSE (TUNISIA) ANNOUNCEMENT

Loyola Professor Peter J. Schraeder will be leading for the 6th year in a row his highly popular interdisciplinary 22-day summer travel course to Tunisia, "Arab World, Islam and U.S. Foreign Policy," May 22-June 11, 2011. For further information (including application materials) please visit [http://luc.edu/studyabroad/summer\\_tunisia.shtml](http://luc.edu/studyabroad/summer_tunisia.shtml). Please contact Professor Schraeder ([pschrae@luc.edu](mailto:pschrae@luc.edu) or 773-508-3070) if you have any questions. Space is limited –apply today!

## Weekly Second Life Feminist Discussion Group

SLLU Feminists Discussion group meets every Sunday at 2 p.m. Pacific (5 p.m. Eastern) Time.

This is an open discussion: bring your own questions, topics, suggestions. They are an informal group, everyone welcome. To attend, open a browser window and click this link:

<http://maps.secondlife.com/secondlife/Flagg/242/39/107>

Membership in Second Life is free; a premium account is unnecessary. To attend this workshop you must have the Second Life Program downloaded to your computer, and earphones or a headset (earphones AND microphone) are recommended. Follow these steps: (1) Check to see your headset is working, using another program. (2) Check to see your computer can run Second Life: <http://secondlife.com/support/system-requirements/>. Join Second Life, using the link at the top right-hand corner of the page. You will be prompted to download the program. (3) With Second Life installed, open a web browser and click this link to arrive on Minerva, the research and teaching space for the Department of Women's Studies at Ohio State. A mentor will be there to meet you <http://maps.secondlife.com/secondlife/Minerva/63/228/28>.

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# CONFERENCES

## **Masculinity and Political Leadership in Europe** December 15, 2010

Dr. Sean Brady and Professor Lucy Riall,  
Birkbeck College, University of London

With a few notable exceptions, questions of masculinity have had little effect on historical approaches to politics and nationalism in European societies. Why is this the case? Are historical masculinity studies simply new ways of writing again about men? Or is there the potential of realising the ambitions of early men's studies in developing highly critical and incisive scholarship in the field of 'traditional' political history, analysing power, absolutism, capitalism, democracy, women's political agency, and political alterity more generally? Would approaches that take the dynamics of masculinity into account revitalise political history in insightful and radical ways? Is there a resistance still among political historians to these approaches, and if so, why? This workshop (at the Institute of Historical Research and Birkbeck UL) brings scholars together for the first time to address these questions. Visit the website at <http://www.history.ac.uk/events/event/2082>



# CALLS FOR PAPERS

## **Compromising Positions: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Missouri and the Midwest**

Call for Papers/Panels | Submission deadline: December 6

This conference will take place on April 7 & 8, 2011 in St. Louis, Missouri. Please feel free to pass the following information on to your colleagues and students; conference and submission info is included below as well as attached in a convenient flyer format. We invite papers, presentations, and panels that confront and interrogate the gendered, raced, and/or sexualized positions of individuals and groups in political, legal, historical, social, educational, and creative arenas in the state of Missouri and the other states in the Midwest from the pre-colonial period through the 1820 Missouri Compromise to the present day. We encourage presentations from those working in history; law; literature and language; composition, rhetoric, and literacy studies; cultural studies; political science; economics; sociology; social work; criminology and criminal justice; psychology; anthropology; media and film studies; art history; medicine; and the biological sciences. Student papers will also be considered, and we encourage you to submit topics for panels. Send 350-500-word proposals or abstracts to [compromising@umsl.edu](mailto:compromising@umsl.edu). Please use abstract submission form. Proposals should include title, contact information, and institutional affiliation. Selected presenters will be notified by late January 2011 and must register for the conference by February 28 to be included in the program. For updated information on the conference, go to <http://umslce.org/index.php/compromising-positions>

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Thursday, December 2, 2010  
Volume 2010, Issue 13

*Digest*  
The weekly  
Women's Studies & Gender Studies  
Loyola University Chicago

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# We want you to Submit!

## Digest Contributor Guidelines

### Principles

#### i) Feminist Consciousness:

- (a) recognizes all voices and experiences as important, and not in a hierarchical form.
- (b) takes responsibility for the self and does not assume false objectivity.
- (c) is not absolutist or detached, but rather, is more inclusive and sensitive to others.

#### ii) Accessibility:

- (a) means utilizing accessible language, theory, knowledge, and structure in your writing.
- (b) maintains a connection with your diverse audience by not using unfamiliar/obscure words, overly long sentences, or abstraction.
- (c) does not assume a specific audience, for example, white 20-year-old college students.

#### iii) Jesuit Social Justice Education & Effort:

- (a) promotes justice in openhanded and generous ways to ensure freedom of inquiry, the pursuit of truth and care for others.
- (b) is made possible through value-based leadership that ensures a consistent focus on personal integrity, ethical behavior, and the appropriate balance between justice and fairness.
- (c) focuses on global awareness by demonstrating an understanding that the world's people and societies are interrelated and interdependent.

### Expectations and Specifics

- You may request to identify yourself by name, alias, or as "anonymous" for publication in the digest. For reasons of accountability, the staff must know who you are, first and last name plus email address.
- We promote accountability of our contributors, and prefer your real name and your preferred title (i.e., Maruka Hernandez, CTA Operations Director, 34 years old, mother of 4; or J. Curtis Main, Loyola graduate student in WSGS, white, 27 years old), but understand, in terms of safety, privacy, and controversy, if you desire limitations. We are happy to publish imagery of you along with your submission, at our discretion.
- We gladly accept submission of varying length- from a quick comment to several pages. Comments may be reserved for a special "feedback" section. In order to process and include a submission for a particular issue, please send your submission at least two days prior to the desired publication date.
- Please include a short statement of context when submitting imagery, audio, and video.
- We appreciate various styles of scholarship; the best work reveals thoughtfulness, insight, and fresh perspectives.
- Such submissions should be clear, concise, and impactful. We aim to be socially conscious and inclusive of various cultures, identities, opinions, and lifestyles.
- As a product of the support and resources of Loyola University and its Women Studies and Gender Studies department, all contributors must be respectful of the origin of the magazine; this can be accomplished in part by ensuring that each article is part of an open discourse rather than an exclusive manifesto.
- All articles must have some clear connection to the mission of the magazine. It may be helpful to provide a sentence or two describing how your article fits into the magazine as a whole.
- The writing must be the original work of the author and may be personal, theoretical, or a combination of the two. When quoting or using the ideas of others, it must be properly quoted and annotated. Please fact-check your work and double-check any quotes, allusions and references. When referencing members of Loyola and the surrounding community, an effort should be made to allow each person to review the section of the article that involves them to allow for fairness and accuracy.
- Gratuitous use of expletives and other inflammatory or degrading words and imagery may be censored if it does not fit with the overall message of the article or magazine. We do not wish to edit content, but if we feel we must insist on changes other than fixing typos and grammar, we will do so with the intent that it does not compromise the author's original message. If no compromise can be made, the editor reserves the right not to publish an article.
- All articles are assumed to be the opinion of the contributor and not necessarily a reflection of the views of Loyola University and the WSGS program.

**We very much look forward to your submissions and your contribution to our overall mission. Please send your submissions to Curtis at: [jmain@luc.edu](mailto:jmain@luc.edu)**

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